

In the Claims:

1-105. (Cancelled)

106. (Currently amended.) A selectively configured porous particulate material comprising a porous particulate material treated with a liquid resin, plastic, cement, sealant or binder, wherein the porous particulate material has inherent or induced permeability and which is selected from the group consisting of porous ceramics, polyolefins, styrene-divinylbenzene copolymers and polyalkylacrylate esters, and further wherein the apparent specific gravity of the selectively configured porous particulate material is less than the apparent specific gravity of the porous particulate material.

107. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 106, wherein the porous particulate material is a natural or non-natural porous ceramic.

108. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 106, wherein the selectively configured porous particulate material exhibits crush resistance under conditions as high as 10,000 psi closure stress.

109. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 106, wherein the porous particulate material has a porosity and permeability such that a fluid may be drawn at least partially into its matrix by capillary action.

110. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 106, wherein the porous particulate material has a porosity and permeability such that a penetrating material may be drawn at least partially into its matrix using a vacuum and/or may be forced at least partially into its porous matrix under pressure.

111. (Cancelled.)

112. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 106, wherein the selectively configured porous particulate material is a porous particulate material treated with a phenol, phenol formaldehyde, melamine formaldehyde, urethane or epoxy resin.

113. (Cancelled.)

114. (Currently amended.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 106 169, wherein the selectively configured porous particulate material is a porous particulate material treated with a penetrating, coating and/or glazing material which is

capable of trapping or encapsulating a fluid having an apparent specific gravity less than the apparent specific gravity of the matrix of the porous particulate material.

115. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 114, wherein the fluid is a gas.

116. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 106, having a size between from about 200 mesh to about 8 mesh.

117. (Cancelled.)

118. (Cancelled.)

119. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 106, wherein the permeability of the selectively configured porous particulate material is less than the permeability of the porous particulate material.

120. (Cancelled.)

121. (Currently amended.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim ~~120~~ 169, wherein the multitude of the porous particulate material is coated or penetrated with a curable resin.

122. (Currently amended.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim ~~120~~ 169, wherein individual particles of the porous particulate material have a maximum length-based aspect ratio of equal to or less than about 5.

123. (Previously presented.) A composition comprising the selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 106 and a carrier fluid.

124. (Previously presented.) The composition of Claim 123, wherein the porous particulate material of the selectively configured porous particulate material is relatively lightweight and/or substantially neutrally buoyant.

125. (Previously presented.) The composition of Claim 123, wherein the carrier fluid is non-gelled.

126. (Previously presented.) The composition of Claim 123, wherein the carrier fluid is a completion or workover brine.

127. (Previously presented.) The composition of Claim 123, wherein the carrier fluid is salt water, fresh water, a liquid hydrocarbon, or a gas or a mixture thereof.

128. (Previously presented.) The composition of Claim 127, wherein the gas is nitrogen or carbon dioxide.

129. (Previously presented.) The composition of Claim 123, further comprising at least one member selected from the group consisting of gelling agents, crosslinking agents, gel breakers, surfactants, foaming agents, demulsifiers, buffers, clay stabilizers, acids and mixtures thereof.

130. (Currently amended.) A selectively configured porous particulate material comprising a porous particulate material coated or penetrated with a liquid resin, plastic, cement, sealant or binder, wherein the porous particulate material has having inherent or induced permeability and which is selected from the group consisting of porous ceramics, polyolefins, styrene-divinylbenzene copolymers and polyalkylacrylate esters, and further wherein the strength of the selectively configured porous particulate material is greater than the strength of the porous particulate material.

131. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 130, wherein the porous particulate material has a porosity and permeability such that a fluid may be drawn at least partially into its matrix by capillary action.

132. (Cancelled.)

133. (Cancelled.)

134. (Cancelled.)

135. (Currently amended.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 134 130, wherein the porous particulate material is relatively lightweight and/or substantially neutrally buoyant.

136. (Currently amended.) A composition comprising the selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 134 130 and a carrier fluid.

137. (Currently amended.) A selectively configured porous particulate material comprising a porous particulate material having inherent or induced permeability which is treated or modified with a glazing material.

138. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 137, wherein the apparent density or apparent specific gravity of the selectively configured porous particulate material is less than the apparent density or apparent specific gravity of the porous particulate material.

139. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 137, wherein the glazed surface enhances the ease of multi-phase fluid flow through a particulate pack.

140. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 137, wherein the glazed surface of the porous particulate material enhances the ease of high rate turbulent gas flow through a particulate pack.

141. (Cancelled.)

142. (Currently amended.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 141 180, wherein the porosity and permeability of the porous particulate material is such that a fluid may be drawn at least partially into the porous matrix of the selectively configured porous particulate material by capillary action.

143. (Cancelled.)

144. (Currently amended.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 141 180, wherein the porous particulate material is relatively lightweight and/or substantially neutrally buoyant.

145. (Currently amended.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 141 180, wherein the porous particulate material is a natural or non-natural porous ceramic.

146. (Cancelled.)

147. (Cancelled.)

148. (Cancelled.)

149. (Cancelled.)

150. (Currently amended.) A composition comprising the selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 141 180 and a carrier fluid.

151. (Previously presented.) The composition of Claim 150, wherein the carrier fluid is non-gelled.

152. (Previously presented.) The composition of Claim 150, wherein the porous particulate of the selectively configured porous particulate material is relatively lightweight and/or substantially neutrally buoyant.

153. (Previously presented.) The composition of Claim 150, wherein the carrier fluid is a completion or workover brine.

154. (Previously presented.) The composition of Claim 150, wherein the carrier fluid is liquefied or foamed.

155. (Cancelled.)

156. (Cancelled.)

157. (Cancelled.)

158. (Cancelled.)

159. (Cancelled.)

160. (Previously presented.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 114, wherein a clay stabilizer is applied to the exterior surface of the porous particulate material to inhibit penetration of the coating or penetrating material.

161. (New.) A selectively configured porous particulate material comprising a porous particulate material having a coating layer of thickness from about 1 to about 5 microns, wherein the porous particulate material has inherent or induced permeability and is selected from the group consisting of porous ceramics, polyolefins, styrene-divinylbenzene copolymers and polyalkylacrylate esters, and further wherein the apparent specific gravity of the selectively configured porous particulate material is less than the apparent specific gravity of the porous particulate material.

162. (New.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 161, wherein the porous particulate material is a natural or non-natural porous ceramic.

163. (New.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 161, wherein the porous particulate material has a porosity and permeability such that a fluid may be drawn at least partially into its matrix by capillary action.

164. (New.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 161, wherein the permeability of the selectively configured porous particulate material is less than the permeability of the porous particulate material.

165. (New.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 161, wherein individual particles of the porous particulate material have a maximum length-based aspect ratio of equal to or less than about 5.

166. (New.) A composition comprising the selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 161 and a carrier fluid.

167. (New.) The composition of Claim 166, wherein the porous particulate material of the selectively configured porous particulate material is relatively lightweight and/or substantially neutrally buoyant.

168. (New.) The composition of Claim 166, wherein the carrier fluid is salt water, fresh water, a liquid hydrocarbon, or a gas or a mixture thereof.

169. (New.) A selectively configured porous particulate material comprising a porous particulate material having inherent or induced permeability and which is selected from the group consisting of porous ceramics, polyolefins, styrene-divinylbenzene copolymers and polyalkylacrylate esters, wherein the apparent specific gravity of the selectively configured porous particulate material is less than the apparent specific gravity of the porous particulate material and further wherein the selectively configured porous particulate material comprises a multitude of the porous particulate material bond together.

170. (New.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 169, wherein the porous particulate material is a natural or non-natural porous ceramic.

171. (New.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 169, wherein the porous particulate material has a porosity and permeability such that a fluid may be drawn at least partially into its matrix by capillary action.

172. (New.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 169, wherein the porous particulate material has a porosity and permeability such that a penetrating material may be drawn at least partially into its matrix using a vacuum and/or may be forced at least partially into its porous matrix under pressure.

173. (New.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 169, wherein the permeability of the selectively configured porous particulate material is less than the permeability of the porous particulate material.

174. (New.) The selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 169, wherein individual particles of the porous particulate material have a maximum length-based aspect ratio of equal to or less than about 5.

175. (New.) A composition comprising the selectively configured porous particulate material of Claim 169 and a carrier fluid.

176. (New.) The composition of Claim 175, wherein the porous particulate material of the selectively configured porous particulate material is relatively lightweight and/or substantially neutrally buoyant.

177. (New.) The composition of Claim 175, wherein the carrier fluid is non-gelled.

178. (New.) The composition of Claim 175, wherein the carrier fluid is a completion or workover brine.

179. (New.) The composition of Claim 175, wherein the carrier fluid is salt water, fresh water, a liquid hydrocarbon, or a gas or a mixture thereof.

180. (New.) A selectively configured porous particulate material comprising a porous particulate material having inherent or induced permeability and treated with nylon, polyethylene, polystyrene or a mixture thereof, wherein the porous particulate material is selected from the group consisting of porous ceramics, polyolefins, styrene-divinylbenzene copolymers and polyalkylacrylate esters, and further wherein the apparent specific gravity of the selectively configured porous particulate material is less than the apparent specific gravity of the porous particulate material.